Government of Newfoundland & Labrador

Moving Forward

A Review of Natural Resource Sector Gender Equity Initiatives

Summary of Jurisdictional Scan Findings for Resource Projects Throughout the World

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to achieving gender equity in the Province's natural resource sector. This is reflected in the provincial Energy Plan, *Focusing Our Energy* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007), and implemented through contractual agreements with the proponents of the Hebron and Hibernia Southern Extension offshore oilfield development projects, and in regulatory requirements for onshore natural resource development projects. These require project proponents to develop and implement Women's Employment Plans in which they:

- Describe the project construction and operations phase requirements for labour, by occupation, and goods and services;
- Describe the management resources, policies, practices and initiatives that will be used to promote gender equity on the project, including how they will be implemented throughout the project value chain;
- Establish measurable quantitative targets for women's employment and women-led business access; and
- Commit to a process for the monitoring, reporting of success in achieving targets, and an associated adaptive management process aimed at continuous improvement.

In support of this provincial commitment to gender equity, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, engaged Stantec to undertake a *Scan of Gender Equity Policies and Practices*. This involved an international review of corporate, government and union policies, programs and initiatives that increase the level of women's participation in the resource sector, supported by study of women's employment and business access in these industries. Information from the Scan will assist government in developing its gender equity policy framework and in informing industry of government's policy direction in this area.

The Scan shows a high level of company, government, union and third sector interest in gender equity. The drivers of this interest include ethical considerations, tightening labour markets, company reputation concerns, and corporate social responsibility. In a number of cases, the benefits of increased gender equity are seen as extending beyond these drivers and related expectations. For example, companies report improved health, safety, productivity and retention rates with respect to both female and male workers.

The Scan identifies a large number of corporate gender equity initiatives. It is not possible or useful to identify any or all of them as representing 'best practice', because they are not equally

applicable or useful across different types of projects, project phases, companies and contexts. However, they do represent a suite or menu of initiatives that have been shown to be effective in promoting gender equity, and which have been adopted by companies engaged in resource development project activities, either in Newfoundland and Labrador or in other comparable jurisdictions.

These initiatives fall within seven focus areas:

- Managing, Monitoring and Reporting
- Employee Recruitment, Selection and Retention
- Employee Development
- Work Environment and Equipment
- Work/Family Balance
- Business Access
- Information and Communications

Companies developing, or considering developing, natural resources projects in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador should review these types of initiative, summarized below and illustrated by example initiatives from other jurisdictions, when considering how best to promote gender equity during construction and operations.

A series of recommendations as to how companies can promote gender equity on natural resource projects, together with a more comprehensive and detailed description of potential initiatives, is provided in the *Scan of Gender Equity Policies and Practices* (DNR, 2011). Additional guidance on gender equity matters is available from the Department of Natural Resources, the provincial Women's Policy Office and such groups as the Women in Resource Development Corporation (WRDC) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs (NLOWE).

MANAGING, MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Scan shows that an overarching consideration in the success of any project gender equity program is developing a diversity culture, and that this only happens when the senior leadership of project companies commit to gender equity and the development of such a culture. This leadership commitment must be made clear at the outset of the project and throughout its life.

> *EXAMPLE INITIATIVE:*
>
> *Has a Senior Advisor solely responsible for Women's Employment, allowing the company to accelerate progress in gender equity*
>
> *-BHP BILLITON (AUSTRALIA)*

Success in promoting gender equity also requires an early and appropriate allocation of management responsibilities and resources within companies. Gender equity must also be cascaded down the project supply chain, with the main subcontractors taking responsibility and allocating responsibilities and related resources. Special management provisions are required when dealing with remote worksites, such as offshore petroleum platforms, fly-in mines, remote hydro projects and some rural construction sites.

Achieving gender equity also requires the prompt implementation of an iterative management process that involves: investigating constraints and the nature of success; setting employment and business access targets; monitoring, evaluating and reporting results in achieving these targets; reviewing and as necessary revising plans and processes; and setting revised targets. These quantitative employment and business access targets should be aspirational, reflecting an overall goal of continuous improvement. In addition to such 'lagging indicators,' quantitative measures of outcomes, qualitative or qualitative 'leading indicators' (commitments to gender equity actions and initiatives) should be set, monitored, reported and revised over time.

Consistent with the provincial Human Rights Act and other legislation (e.g. the Atlantic Accord Implementation Acts), project proponents and their contractors may not allow the presence of unions to stand in the way of gender equity. To help address this, it is important that companies engage the relevant union at an early stage.

The experiences of women provide an important measure of, and insights into, the barriers they face and the effectiveness of initiatives designed to address them. Companies find it very useful to consult prospective, current and departing female employees, and female entrepreneurs, about constraints to women's employment and business access and the effectiveness of current and potential project gender equity initiatives.

EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND RETENTION

This focus area is primarily concerned with providing a pool of available workers, engaging in such community outreach as participating in career days, and having procedures that encourage women to apply for positions and hiring processes that emphasize equity and fairness. Generally speaking, it is important that companies review and as necessary revise their human resources policies and procedures to ensure that they emphasize equity and fairness, are proactive in encouraging the recruitment and retention of women, and identify and remove barriers to their recruitment and retention.

EXAMPLE INITIATIVE:

In partnership with the Society of Women Engineers, has a 'Stilettos to Steel Toes' essay contest that exposes female engineering students to traditionally male careers in the oil and gas industry

-SCHLUMBERGER (UNITED STATES)

The Scan also identifies a number of specific actions that assist the recruitment, selection and retention of women. These include providing copies of job advertisements directly to community groups supportive of women's employment, having a community outreach program that includes initiatives specifically designed to attract girls and women, providing support to community-based gender equity programs, assisting universities and colleges in identifying and delivering training for occupations in which women are under-represented, and providing scholarships and bursaries to women interested in taking such training.

EXAMPLE INITIATIVE:

Provides local community training that encourages women to operate haul trucks. The traineeships offer the prospect of full-time work without employees having to leave their families

-THEISS (AUSTRALIA)

Holding women-only employment competitions, which are permissible under a provincial Human Rights Act Special Order, may be particularly valuable in a tight labour market.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Employee development is concerned with giving women opportunities to advance in the company. It encompasses such initiatives as the provision of training, mentoring and other career advancement opportunities. The greatest opportunities from a company perspective usually relate

to operations and management positions, given the relatively short duration of trades and trades-related employment in construction activity.

> *EXAMPLE INITIATIVE:*
>
> *Maintains a women's networking group that provides career development and mentoring for female employees at all levels*
>
> *-TRANS CANADA CORP (CANADA)*

Successful employee development initiatives identified in the Scan include providing women employees with training, mentoring and other career advancement opportunities, and helping them establish and operate women's networking and mentoring groups and arrangements. More generally, it is important that companies review and as necessary revise their human resources policies and procedures to ensure they encourage, and identify and remove barriers to, the advancement of women employees.

WORK ENVIRONMENT AND EQUIPMENT

> *EXAMPLE INITIATIVE:*
>
> *A Connect Women global women's network provides women working in remote locations the opportunity to communicate and get support from other women across the company, and highlights the critical issues that women face in their field assignments*
>
> *-SCHLUMBERGER (UNITED STATES)*

The work environment has both physical and social dimensions. The former includes the design of workplace and any worker accommodations, and the provision of protective gear and equipment appropriate for female as well as male workers. In the latter case, it includes providing: a supportive, accommodative and safe social environment; a harassment-free and respectful workplace; gender sensitivity and violence prevention training; and, Occupational Health and Safety mechanisms that are supportive of women employees. In the case of work camps in particular, it is important to provide a home-like, rather than an institutional, social environment.

The design of the worksite is particularly important in the case of remote projects where employees spend extended work and non-work hours with other employees. At all worksites, though, it is important that facilities are truly accommodative of women, including through consideration for their privacy, safety and convenience. In one example area, the design of workplaces and work camps,

and related policies, can facilitate women and men having confidential telephone and internet access to their family members.

Initiatives that support having a supportive, accommodative and safe social environment include: requiring that all employees receive gender sensitivity, respectful workplace and violence prevention training; prohibiting the display of sexist material and the open exchange and use of pornographic material; and encouraging women's networking and support groups.

WORK/FAMILY BALANCE

While work/family balance is important for both female and male employees, it is more important for attracting and retaining the former, given the employment cycle of many women, with periods when they choose to stay home with children, and then re-enter the workforce. Women's family responsibilities commonly also include dealing with emergencies and, increasingly, taking care of elderly parents. Such topics have particular dimensions and significance respecting employment at remote worksites.

EXAMPLE INITIATIVE:

A 'Hydroflex' program provides flexible working conditions that enable all employees, their families, and the organization to achieve balance in a functional and satisfying way

-NORSK HYDRO (NORWAY)

Work/family balance initiatives identified by the Scan are primarily concerned with choice and flexibility in work hours, leave schedules and overtime requirements so as to facilitate child and elder care. While such initiatives are primarily directed at women, companies are also recognizing that they help attract and retain male workers. Other relevant initiatives include topping-up provincial and federal maternity and paternity leave and support, providing women on maternity leave with opportunities to maintain their employment interests and connections, and facilitating working from home and telecommuting.

Child and elder care is often cited as a major constraint to women's employment in Newfoundland and Labrador, with a limited availability of good quality facilities. Given this, it is expected that an 'employer of choice' will want to assist its employees in accessing appropriate affordable or subsidized quality child and elder care. Example initiatives include assisting in the establishment of new facilities, contracting for employer-assisted provision, or providing daycare vouchers.

BUSINESS ACCESS

Companies often have difficulty in reaching out to small and women-led businesses. In turn, these businesses, and entrepreneurs who might establish businesses, are often ignorant of or daunted by the size of projects, the size and nature of project goods and services requirements, and the related procurement and other processes and requirements. The Scan identifies business access initiatives that mostly involve better communicating project opportunities to women-led businesses, working with them to better prepare for bidding on contracts, and providing mentoring and assistance with business processes, financial matters and certifications.

EXAMPLE INITIATIVE:

Supplier Diversity Program uses "focused forums", which connect procurement professionals with minority women business enterprises firms that have proven industry experience and a track record of safe, competitive and innovative performance

-SHELL (UNITED STATES)

It may be necessary to modify supplier development and procurement policies and procedures to accommodate women-led businesses and encourage. and identify and remove barriers to, their use. Companies should also be proactive in communicating with women-led businesses and with the business community, especially in the vicinity of project activity, about opportunities that might be suitable for existing and new women-led businesses. Specific initiatives that have been successful on different projects include appointing procurement staff charged with providing women-led companies with mentoring and assistance with business processes, financial matters and certification.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Information and communications can both internal and external. Internal initiatives include information sessions that educate about gender equity, and a range of gender sensitivity, respectful workplace and violence prevention training and related materials. External information and communications initiatives include community outreach programs, such as open houses and career fairs. In the latter case, the use of targeted information and communications initiatives is important given the evidence that they are much more likely to attract women (including female entrepreneurs) and girls.

Many of the companies examined in the Scan acknowledge the importance of having an appropriate representation of women and use of gender-inclusive language in internal and external promotional, motivational and educational print and electronic material. Accordingly, they have protocols and processes related to the development and review of such material.

EXAMPLE INITIATIVE:

Has diversity training, diversity moments, personal diversity action plans and lunch-time diversity learning sessions, to ensure that employees understand corporate policies and know how inclusion is practiced throughout the company

-CHEVRON (CANADA)

CONCLUSION

There is an increasingly strong business case for gender equity and diversity. Tight labour markets are making it more and more important for companies to attract and retain women and to be seen as employers of choice. Corporate social responsibility, and reputation and liability concerns, continue to influence corporate policy. Companies are also finding that the benefits of increased gender equity extended beyond the above drivers and related expectations; for example, companies surveyed for the Scan reported improved health, safety, productivity and retention rates with respect to both female and male workers.

These business trends also apply in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially given its evolving labour market. Allied with the reinforcing effect of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to gender diversity, there is every prospect that the recommendations and initiatives presented in the Scan can result in further progress towards gender equity, to the mutual benefit of natural resource industry companies and the women and men of Newfoundland and Labrador.